

# Maurice Hinchey NEWS

## 26<sup>TH</sup> CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT, NEW YORK

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### **HINCHEY SAYS VERIZON LAYOFFS BAD FOR ECONOMY AND FOR PHONE CUSTOMERS**

KINGSTON - U.S. Representative Maurice Hinchey (NY-26) today sharply criticized Verizon's decision this week to lay off 2,400 workers in New York State. Joined by Verizon workers and consumers at a press conference, Hinchey cited the severe effect this action will have on the upstate economy and on the quality of telephone service.

"Verizon says it has a surplus of workers," said Hinchey. "But the facts show that they're already spread too thin. With the workforce reduction that has already taken place prior to the layoffs, service to telephone customers has worsened drastically. In the meantime, New York's economy suffers another blow because of the lost buying power of these middle-income workers."

Verizon, which has 46,000 employees in New York, announced on Thursday that it is laying off 2,400 workers in the state effective immediately. This marks the first time in history that New York's local telephone company has laid off union workers. The company said that most of those cut are installation and service technicians. It is believed that 1,100 of the laid-off workers were employed at upstate locations. The cuts were part of approximately 3,500 that took place throughout the Northeast.

In October, the company made known its plan to reduce its workforce in New York by 3,800 jobs. Prior to that it had already cut jobs in the state by 13.6 percent in 2002. That workforce reduction during the first three quarters of the year was accompanied by a 26 percent increase in troubles reported by customers, a 119 percent increase in out-of-service troubles not fixed within 24 hours, and a 203 percent increase in other troubles not fixed within 48 hours.

Following the October announcement, Hinchey wrote to the New York State Public Service Commission (PSC) and to Verizon CEO Ivan Seidenberg, pointing out the negative effects on service of the workforce reduction. Hinchey wrote to the PSC in support of a petition submitted by the Communications Workers of America that contends that Verizon is violating its PSC-approved plan for providing quality service. He wrote to Seidenberg urging him to reconsider the layoffs.